



**For Immediate Release
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**Contact: Wendy Fox
617-626-1453**

STATE CELEBRATES INTRODUCTION OF NEW ACCESSIBLE SAILING PROGRAM

BOSTON—Small sailboats on the Charles River, set against the city skyline, are a trademark image of Boston, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) new accessible sailing partnership will open up this experience to people of all abilities.

DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., today joined representatives from Community Boating, Inc., to celebrate the launch of a new accessible sailing program on the Esplanade in Boston. The new program, a partnership between Community Boating and DCR's Universal Access Program (UAP), aims to help people with disabilities learn to sail or to simply enjoy sailing with specially adapted sailboats.

"This event marks a significant step in expanding accessible recreation programs in eastern Massachusetts," said Commissioner Sullivan. "The accessible sailing program joins a growing number of accessible hiking programs, paddling activities, and other inclusive recreation programs taking place this summer at other DCR facilities here in the Boston area and in state parks across the Commonwealth."

A private donation from Nancy and Gary Ranno-Carlston, matched by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Office of Public Private Partnerships, funded the \$40,000 retrofitting of Massachusetts-built Cape Cod Mercury and Sonar boats. Community Boating staff have made the boats accessible to people with a wide range of physical ability, by designing and installing features such as contoured and supportive adjustable seating and higher booms, so passengers do not have to move from side to side when turning.

"Community Boating is thrilled to be working closely with DCR to make this groundbreaking program a reality," said Community Boating Executive Director Charles Zechel. "While accessible sailing programs have been developed across the nation and around the world, we believe that the Charles River is special as a very safe and accessible venue."

The program will be available for 20 days over the summer, with funding from DCR's Universal Access Program and, in part, through a \$6,000 charitable grant from Genzyme Corporation. The program will be held every Thursday through August 30, and select Saturdays and Sundays (July 1, July 7, July 15, July 21, July 29, August 4, August 12, August 18, August 26 and September 1) at Community Boating's facility on the Esplanade. Staff

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston MA 02114-2119
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax
www.mass.gov/dcr



Deval L. Patrick
Governor

Timothy P. Murray
Lt. Governor

Ian A. Bowles, Secretary, Executive
Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation

assistance will be available for instruction and providing sailing excursions on the river, as well as helping participants in and out of the boats. The program costs \$1 per person for the entire summer; pre-registration is required (call Community Boating at 617-523-1038 ext. 23).

The accessible sailing program joins the 16 other established outdoor recreation programs run by UAP in more than 30 DCR state parks, including kayaking, cycling, hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and ice skating. More than 160 of these programs were run in 2006, serving more than 5,000 people, with the goal of increasing participation among persons with disabilities in indoor and outdoor recreation activities in integrated settings. For additional information, see http://www.mass.gov/dcr/universal_access/index.htm or call 413-545-5353 (voice) or 413-577-2200 (TTY).

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